

I. AMENDMENTS

In the claims:

Please add the following claims:

--54. (New) The purified protein of claim 1, wherein the protein is further characterized as having the same binding activity as the protein having the amino acid sequence of SEQ. ID NO. 2.--

--55. (New) A purified protein having the amino acid sequence of SEQ. ID NO. 2, and functional equivalents thereof.--

II. REMARKS

Claims 1, 22 and 36 through 53 are pending in this application. By this Preliminary Amendment, new claims 54 and 55 have been added. Support for the new claims is found in the specification on page 6, lines 1 through 35. An issue of new matter is not raised by the addition of these new claims and entry thereof is respectfully requested.

III. CONCLUSION

If a telephone interview would be of assistance in advancing prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided below. In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicant petitions for any

required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952 (Ref. No.: 20344-21025.01)**. However, the Assistant Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

Dated: August 12, 1997

Respectfully submitted,

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